

**An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna  
Department of Education and Skills**

**Programme Evaluation in JCSP**

**REPORT**

<b>Ainm na scoile / School name</b>	St Paul's Secondary School
<b>Seoladh na scoile / School address</b>	Monasterevin Co Kildare
<b>Uimhir rolla / Roll number</b>	61702D

**Date of Evaluation: 28-02-2017**



## **WHAT IS A PROGRAMME EVALUATION?**

The programme evaluation model of inspection is used to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the following programmes and to provide advice and support to teachers, principals and school management in post-primary schools and centres for education:

- Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP)
- Transition Year (TY) programme
- Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) programme
- Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP)

## **HOW TO READ THIS REPORT**

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated learning and teaching in JCSP under the following headings:

1. Teaching and learning
2. Programme provision and whole-school support
3. Programme planning, co-ordination and evaluation

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

The board accepts the report as the final inspection report available for publication and wished to respond formally to the report. The Board agrees that the response submitted will be included as an appendix to the published report. The board's response is submitted below.

## JCSP

### INSPECTION ACTIVITIES DURING THIS INSPECTION

<b>Dates of inspection</b>	27 & 28-02-2017
<b>Inspection activities undertaken</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion with principal and teachers</li><li>• Review of relevant documents</li><li>• Examination of students' work</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Observation of teaching and learning during six class periods</li><li>• Interaction with students</li><li>• Meeting with the core JCSP team</li><li>• Feedback to principal and teachers</li></ul>

### SCHOOL CONTEXT

St. Paul's Secondary School is a co-educational post-primary school with an enrolment of 389 students. The school participates in Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS), the action plan of the Department of Education and Skills for educational inclusion. The board accepts the report as the final inspection report available for publication and wished to respond formally to the report. The Board agrees that the response submitted will be included as an appendix to the published report. The board's response is submitted below.

### SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### FINDINGS

- The overall quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to very good, with exemplary practice observed in a lesson.
- Classroom management was very good and positive interactions were noted in all lessons.
- Effective teaching approaches observed promoted students taking an active role in their learning.
- All students in junior cycle are registered for JCSP, however, only a small proportion of these are profiled.
- A core JCSP team meets regularly and supports the work of the programme co-ordinator.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teaching approaches that provide greater opportunities for students to be more involved in independent or collaborative learning activities should be used more often in lessons.
- School management should ensure that all students registered to participate in JCSP be profiled in accordance with the core principles underpinning the programme.
- Timetabling of Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) should be reviewed to ensure compliance with Circular 0015/2017.
- A whole-school review of the existing practices around the JCSP should be undertaken to ensure that the core principles of the programme are fully understood by all involved and that the programme is implemented in the appropriate manner.

## DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to very good, with exemplary practice observed in one lesson.
- Planning by individual teachers in terms of content and resources was very good. Classroom management was very good and positive interactions were noted in all lessons.
- Learning intentions were established at the outset of the lessons. However, on occasions these were not sufficiently explicit to ensure that students had a very clear understanding of what was to be achieved. Where exemplary practice was noted, the intentions were clearly explained to students, set in context and linked to the JCSP statements. This practice should be extended to all lessons.
- A range of teaching strategies were observed and most were successful when a student-centred approach was used. Highly effective group work was used in some lessons and was characterised by students having a clear understanding of their specific role and responsibilities within the group.
- In a few lessons, the teacher voice dominated and students were less active in the learning. In such lessons the provision of greater opportunities for students to be more involved in independent or collaborative learning activities is recommended.
- Higher-order questions were used to very good effect in some lessons to challenge students. Less effective was the use in some lessons of procedural or recall type questions. The implementation of effective questioning strategies is an area for development and one the school has identified as a focus for school self-evaluation
- Assessment for learning practices were very effectively used by some teachers. For example, as teachers circulated they monitored students' work and used these observations to provide individual or whole-class affirmation or to identify areas for development. Such practices could be extended to more lessons.
- Very good written formative feedback was noted in many lessons and was in line with the school's assessment practices. Effective peer-assessment was noted in a few lessons and is being further developed on a whole-school level.
- The learning environment was greatly enhanced by displays of students' work and commercially sourced materials.
- A range of resources was successfully integrated in lessons. Excellent use was made of a visualiser in a lesson, as a tool to support learning through the display of exemplars of work or for demonstration. Students used show me boards but there is scope for teachers to exploit their use further during paired activities to develop the student voice.
- There was a very good focus on developing students' literacy skills with key words explicitly taught in lessons. Students demonstrated good oral language and were confident speakers. Numeracy skills were developed in some lessons, but were not promoted to the same extent as literacy.

## **2. PROGRAMME PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT**

- Although all junior cycle students follow JCSP, approximately one third of each year group are targeted JCSP students and are profiled. Overall arrangements for the profiling of JCSP students require immediate attention and management should ensure that all students who follow the JCSP are profiled in line with the core principles of the programme.
- Time allocated to subjects is mostly in line with requirements. Currently, CSPE is not provided for on the school's timetable, this requires attention to ensure compliance with Circular 0015/2017.
- Teachers are encouraged and have been facilitated to participate in continuing professional development courses.
- A wide range of interesting and appealing JCSP initiatives is arranged for students.
- Very good systems are in place to support communication with the school and home. The school also organises parent courses. The school benefits from very good working relationships it has developed with the wider community.

## **3. PROGRAMME PLANNING, CO-ORDINATION AND EVALUATION**

- The school's JCSP policy document provides an overview of the organisational details of the programme in the school. It is recommended that the policy be updated to include additional data such as retention and attainment data for JCSP students.
- Subject schemes of work should be updated to include teaching approaches, assessment strategies and learning intentions that will support and guide classroom practice. This should also allow for greater alignment of JCSP statements and schemes of work.
- The position of co-ordinator of JCSP comes under the remit of the post holder for Programme Co-ordinator. Duties associated with the position are undertaken in an effective manner. In addition, a core JCSP team is in place. This team undertakes planning tasks for JCSP and manages the profiling of targeted JCSP students.
- It is recommended that a whole-school review of the existing practices around the JCSP be undertaken to ensure that the core principles of the programme are fully understood by all involved and that the programme is implemented in the appropriate manner.

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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and relevant key staff at the conclusion of the evaluation.

# **Appendix**

**SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT**

**Submitted by the Board of Management**

## **Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report**

The Board of Management of St Paul's Secondary School welcomes this report by the Inspectorate. The Board of Management wish to thank the inspectors for a thorough inspection and for this complimentary and constructive report.

The Board of Management acknowledges and affirms the main findings of the report. The Board wish to acknowledge the high quality of teaching and learning in the school. The Board wish to compliment the teaching staff and students for their continued co-operation to improve teaching and learning.

The Board of Management acknowledges that the provision of CSPE must be re-established in line with Circular 0015/2017 and commits to overseeing the development of the recommendations in this report.

## **Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.**

The following actions have been undertaken since the initial inspection:

- The school have engaged with the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) to assist in the review of JCSP in the school and representative has had an initial visit to the school liaising with the co-ordinator.
- The Core Team have agreed that only targeted students should be included in the JCSP Programme from September 2017.
- All future Junior Cycle students will follow the CSPE per Circular 0015/2017.

The following actions will be prioritised for development as practical:

- The Introduction of Effective Questioning as part of the five year Teaching and Learning Plan planned for September 2017 will provide greater opportunities for independent and collaborative learning activities.

## THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
<b>Very Good</b>	<b>Very good</b> applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is <b>outstanding</b> and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
<b>Good</b>	<b>Good</b> applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b> applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
<b>Fair</b>	<b>Fair</b> applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
<b>Weak</b>	<b>Weak</b> applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;